

Love Your Friends, Die Laughing

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/28966500) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/28966500>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Video Blogging RPF
Relationship:	Clay Dream/GeorgeNotFound (Video Blogging RPF)
Character:	Clay Dream (Video Blogging RPF) , GeorgeNotFound (Video Blogging RPF) , Sapnap (Video Blogging RPF) , Karl Jacobs , Antfrost (Video Blogging RPF)
Additional Tags:	Established Relationship , POV Multiple , Hurt/Comfort , Fluff , POV Outsider , First Meetings , Implied Sexual Content
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2021-01-24 Words: 3407

Love Your Friends, Die Laughing

by [hendollana](#)

Summary

“Oh my god, I’m asking if it’s just flirting or something more, Clay.” Nick asks.

“Ah, about that,” Clay says, bringing a hand up to rest on the back of his neck, “Me and George, we’re sort of, dating, I guess?”

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or, Clay and George's relationship through the eyes of their friends.

Notes

three fics in a week? very unusual behaviour from me, but online university starts again tomorrow so i'll be posting less so i thought i'd bang another fic out tonight ahah

also! i finally made a twitter for my dnf writing, so if you wanna follow me there and see what wips i'm working on ect, it's [@rowrjtes](#)

(title from man overboard)

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Nick’s known Clay the longest, since he was still in middle school and playing Minecraft on the family computer, so maybe that’s why he’s the first person to notice Clay’s feelings for George go

a little further than friendship.

It's just, Nick knows Clay loves all his friends. He knows Clay is expressive with his love, knows that the older isn't shy when it comes to letting his friends know how much Clay appreciates them. Nick's on the receiving end of it often enough.

But it's *different* with George.

Clay's always the first to come to George's aid or defence and he always takes the flirty joking that little more seriously than he does with Nick. He's heard Clay and George whisper softly to each other when they sleep call together and think Nick's fallen asleep, heard the way Clay lowers his voice in a gentle tone that he's never used around anyone but George.

Nick figures it's more than a friend type of love by the way it grows. They're teen boys when they all meet and it's the 2010s, they're all reserved with their affection towards each other. But then they get older, and closer, and ending calls with a 'love you bro' becomes second nature.

It's different with George in that way too. Nick knows the oldest of the three is the most reserved when it comes to showing his love for them. It doesn't stop Clay though, Clay still let's George know how important he is to him, makes sure George knows how much Clay appreciates all the coding he does for them. Nick sometimes wonders if Clay would bother if he didn't feel *more* for George than he does his other friends.

Then they start getting bigger, and even *bigger*, and before Nick can stop and breathe Clay is hitting five million, and it's insane and everyday feels like a fever dream to Nick. Everything changes in six months, but the one thing that never changes is the way Clay smiles when anyone mentions George's name.

Nick asks Clay about it in a Discord call on a Sunday.

"So, you and George?"

"Me and George?" Clay replies, raising an eyebrow.

"You guys flirt a lot," Nick says, and then feels the need to emphasize when all Clay does in response is keep his brow raised, "like, *a lot*."

"Is that an issue?"

Nick groans into his hand, scratching lightly at his beard, "Obviously not, Clay."

"Then what are you asking here?" Clay asks, and Nick can tell he's getting a bit annoyed.

For someone as clever and quick as Clay, Nick thinks he can be awfully dense.

"I'm just saying y'all flirt a lot, I mean even the fans notice." Nick says, though, he thinks notice is an understatement.

Clay just nods in response and drags his eyes from looking at Nick to the monitor next to it where he's editing a video. Okay, Nick thinks, so he's going to be more stubborn than originally thought.

"Oh my god, I'm asking if it's just flirting or something more, Clay."

This, as Nick had expected, gets Clay's attention back. The blond looks back over to the monitor with Nick's face on it, but now he looks kind of worried, as if Nick's uncovered a secret that Clay

thought he had well buried.

“Ah, about that,” Clay says, sheepishly bringing a hand up to rest on the back of his neck, “Me and George, we’re sort of, dating, I guess?”

Looking back, Nick wishes his initial response hadn’t been to drop his mouth open in shock and stare at Clay as if he’d just announced his imminent death. In Nick’s defence though, he really wasn’t expecting Clay to drop that bombshell.

“You’re *what* ?”

“Dating, like as a couple.” Clay repeats, but he’s looking more nervous and unsure by the second and Nick doesn’t really like it when the guy he’s looked up to since he was eleven looks scared of Nick’s own reaction.

“What? Since when?” Nick asks again, and he knows he’s probably not seeming like the all supportive best friend he is but honestly he’s in shock. Nick knew that Clay’s feelings for George were definitely there but he had no clue that the two had acted on it.

“Uh, three months tomorrow.” Clay answers quietly, he’s brought his hand down from his neck and is instead nervously tapping away on his desk.

“Three *MONTHS* ?” Nick questions, brows raised, “I cannot believe you didn’t tell me.”

Nick watches as Clay’s shoulders fall a little, tension draining from his body.

“So you don’t mind?” Clay asks, “That me and George are dating?”

“No, of course not, I kind of figured you liked him.” Nick replies, grinning as his friend blushes a little.

“Yeah,” Clay says, and now he’s smiling too, “And George likes me too, so here we are.”

“Huh,” Nick breathes, “Here we are.”

Ant isn’t sure what to expect when he first takes part in a manhunt.

To be honest, he was a little freaked out when Clay had first messaged him and asked if he’d like to be the fourth hunter in the newest video. Even though Ant had said yes without much second thought, but he still felt a bit nervous when they set up to record a few days later.

Whatever Ant had expected, it was definitely not the amount of footage he knew would have to be cut because of Clay and George outing themselves.

“Aw, poor Georgie.” Clay says, tone playful, after Ant sees the ‘GeorgeNotFound fell from a high place’ chat pop up.

“George,” Nick groans over the call, “Can you run back and get your stuff?”

“I mean,” George starts, and Ant sees his character run past his own at spawn, “Yeah, give me

food though.”

Ant rolls his eyes at George, even though the Brit can’t see him, but drops down a few steaks nonetheless.

“No point, burned it all.” Clay laughs, and Ant thinks they’re probably going to lose this manhunt.

“I’m literally going to break up with you.” George deadpans, and Ant can’t help the laugh that leaves his mouth.

“ *George* , I can’t use any of that footage now.” Clay whines, and Ant’s laughing even more now because when he first found out about the two, he just *knew* they’d bicker like an old married couple, it's nice to see himself proved right.

“Oh?” George speaks, and Ant can almost imagine the small smirk on his face, “So you care more about the footage than me breaking up with you?”

“Boys,” Darryl chastises, “No arguing please.”

Ant knows Darryl is joking, because for as long as Ant’s known Clay and George to be a couple he’s never heard them having a serious argument. They make Ant wonder if soulmates exist.

“Okay, well, you love me way too much to break up with me, so, yeah I care more about the footage.” Clay replies, a smile evident in his tone.

“Whatever helps you sleep at night.” George says back, already making his way down a cave to try to mine his full iron back.

Ant also hadn’t realised just how long it takes to film a full manhunt, they’re already near the three hour mark when they make it through the end portal. He *knows* they’re definitely going to lose when he sees Clay’s already destroyed half the end crystals.

“Oh, Dreeeeam.” George singsongs, and Ant can hear him tapping away on his WASD keys over the call as he makes his way towards the tower Clay has his character on.

“Oh Geeeeoorge,” Clay replies, and he must be feeling confident about his imminent win because the next words out his mouth even shock Ant a little, “Are you gonna be a good boy for me and wait there whilst I finish killing the ender dragon?”

And really, Ant thinks, can Clay not keep it in his pants for three hours.

“Oh my god, Dream, what?” Nick laughs, disbelief clouding his voice, “Okay well, George might be into that but we’re not, and we can still kill you without him.”

“ *Clay* ,” George hisses through the call, “Don’t say shit like that in front of people.”

Clay’s laughing now, that wheeze laugh that George had waxed poetic about whilst drunk once, “Sorry, sorry, I’ll make it up to you later.”

“Oh, I’m sure you will,” Ant says, laughing along now too, sneaking up to Clay's character with a diamond axe in hand, “But, behind you, Dream.”

Karl's kind of honoured to be one of the two people on the SMP that have George's phone number. Even *Sapnap* doesn't have George's number.

Clay's the other person that does, obviously.

"And, I have it set up so Dream's call goes through like silence and stuff." George explains to Quackity.

Karl resists the urge to aw over call. He's streaming, he can't let his fans catch him simping for DreamNotFound.

"Ooooh." Quackity responds, and Karl can hear the curiosity in his voice, desperate to know *what's* so important that Clay can wake up George if needed.

Karl knows, well, he doesn't *know* know. But he's not stupid, and he talks to Clay and George enough to work out they're not just friends.

He'll bring it up to George someday, let the Brit know he has Karl's undying love and support.

Clay and George kind of make Karl love love. They're not even out to Karl, so when they're on call together off-stream they're not as obvious around him as Karl figures they are around Nick and Darryl. But it's still *there* .

Their love for each other is always on show, Karl thinks. From the way George so freely admits he's gone out his way to set it up on his phone so Clay can call him whenever he likes, to the way Clay brings George out his shell, turning introvert into funny, cool, confident.

Okay, so maybe Karl is a DreamNotFound simp, but his fans don't need to know that.

Nick's lived with Clay for two weeks, and *fuck* , it's been amazing, everything he could have ever dreamed of when he was younger, when he gets a call from George.

It's nine in the evening, and none of them had streamed or been on call together that day, so Nick happily picks up thinking George just wants to chat.

He is, decidedly, wrong.

" *Nick* ?" George breathes through the phone, but he sounds different, like his voice is stuck in his throat.

"Yeah, what's up?"

"Fuck, Nick, can you," George says, "Is Clay with you?"

"Uh, no, he's asleep. Why?" Nick replies, sitting up on his bed a bit alarmed, because George sounds more than different. He sounds panicked, upset, and Nick isn't sure what to do.

"Shit," George whimpers, and now Nick is really worried, "Sorry, don't worry then."

"No, I can wake him up?" Nick asks, and listens intently as he hears George choke back a sob,

"Gogy, let me go wake him up for you."

"Please." George replies softly, and Nick can hear his sniffles over the phone that spur him into action.

"You okay?" Nick asks quietly, opening his door and crossing the hallway to Clay's.

Fuck, he really hopes Clay hasn't got his door locked.

"No, I, I don't know," George answers, and Nick can hear the tears in his voice and he positively *hates* it, *hates* it when his friends are upset and there's nothing he can do, "Just need Clay."

"I know, I know," Nick soothes, scowling a little when he tries Clay's door handle but finds it *is* locked, "His door's locked, so I'm gonna shout on him to wake him up, okay?"

Nick hears George mumble an affirmative noise and takes this as his cue to bash on Clay's door harder than he does his desk after dying in manhunt.

" *CLAY* ?" Nick shouts, and silently hopes their neighbours don't make a noise complaint. Nick figures it'd be worth it for George though.

"CLAY!" Nick shouts again, because he can hear George's breathing speed up a little over the phone and he needs Clay to fix this as soon as possible, "WAKE UP, for fucks sake."

Nick can't stop the sigh of relief he lets out when he hears Clay's bed creaking as if he's getting up and Clay shout back a 'what?'.

"Okay, he's awake, two seconds, George." Nick murmurs, trying best to pitch his voice in a soothing tone.

"Okay, thanks." George whispers back, sounding so sad it physically pains Nick.

Clay's door is rattling and next thing Nick knows, he's faced with Clay with sleep mussed hair looking very annoyed he's been woken up.

"What?" The taller grumbles.

"It's George, on the phone, he needs you." Nick explains in a hurry, holding out his phone for Clay to take.

It's like a switch has flipped in Clay's brain and he goes from looking pissed to have been woken up mid nap to the most concerned Nick's ever seen him.

"What? Is he okay? When did he call?" Clay rushes out, reaching his hand to grab the phone from Nick and press it against his ear.

"Like five minutes ago, just, he seems so upset." Nick explains, but Clay is already speaking into the phone in hushed tones, brows furrowed in worry.

" *Baby* , Georgie, no, it's okay, shh, please," Clay speaks, and Nick is struck by how good Clay is in these situations, "Just breathe yeah? In and out with me."

Clay's slowly closing the door behind him as he over exaggerates his breathing for George to copy, and Nick waves his hand in dismissal when Clay mouths a thank you to him.

It's two hours later when Nick hears Clay knock on his door and enter, Nick's phone twirling

between his long fingers.

"Hey," Nick smiles, "George okay?"

"Yeah," Clay says back, and his voice is still soft in a way Nick's unaccustomed to, "He is now anyway."

"Good, good, I was worried," Nick breathes a sigh of relief, "What was wrong? If George doesn't mind you saying."

"Just, lots of stuff really, covid mostly," Clay replies, shrugging a little, "I think he's just upset he's not here with us, I mean, I know I am."

"Yeah, I wish George was here too, man." Nick says sadly, and he really does, it's great living with just Clay. But they both know it would be better if George was there too, getting takeaway with them and sleeping cuddled up to Clay on their sofa.

"My fault really," Clay says guiltily, "I had my pc volume off and my phone was out of battery, so George couldn't get through to me."

Clay really *does* look as if he thinks it's all his fault, unaware of the fact he'd just talked George down from what seemed to Nick as a near breakdown.

"Nah, dude, don't be silly," Nick says, standing up to pull Clay into a hug, "You made him feel better in the end, yeah?"

"I suppose," Clay mumbles, stepping out from the hug to press Nick's phone into his hand, "Anyway, here's your phone back, sorry we didn't even realise we were still on yours until I went to switch the call to discord."

Nick smiles at Clay, reaching a hand up to ruffle up his still messed up hair, "No worries, y'all still on call now?"

"Yeah, just till George falls asleep anyway." Clay replies, glancing at his still open door, and Nick can tell his mind is still on George and getting back to him as soon as possible.

And who is Nick to stop him?

"Well, you best be off then." Nick grins.

Clay hugs Nick one last time, and then he's back in his own room and closing his door before Nick can say goodnight.

Nick wonders if anyone will ever love him the way Clay loves George.

Clay's been buzzing with excitement all day, and Nick's not sure how much more of it he can take. The elder is practically vibrating with joy as he pushes Nick out the door and into the passenger seat of the car.

"You know," Nick muses, clipping his seatbelt into place, "George's plane doesn't even land for

another like, hour.”

“And?” Clay speaks, hand on the back of Nick’s headrest as he reverses out the drive, “I don’t wanna be late.”

Nick rolls his eyes a little, but Clay knows it’s fondly, “Late? The airport is literally a fifteen minute drive.”

“Whatever,” Clay smiles back, “I just, I meet *George* today, like, actually meet him.”

It’s unbelievably cute how excited Clay is, Nick knows this, but he’s had to put up with it ever since the lockdown was lifted and George booked his flights to come visit. It’s like living with a kid on Christmas Eve.

“ *We* , Clay, we meet George today.” Nick laughs looking out the window, and he’s still not used to the palm trees that line the roads in Florida.

“Okay well, he’s more excited to meet me.” Clay laughs, they’ve got the windows down in the summer heat and Clay’s hair is gently blowing in the breeze and Nick just knows George is going to lose his mind when he sees that.

“Only because I’m not going to kiss him.”

“Damn, poor George.” Clay fake coos, and if Nick weren’t so happy for his best friends finally meeting, he’d smack him.

Instead Nick groans as they pull into the parking lot a whole forty five minutes early.

Clay’s fidgeting excitedly as they walk into the arrivals of Orlando International Airport, and Nick thinks he’s even looking a little nervous.

“Scared?” Nick asks, brow raised as Clay scoffs at him.

“Me? Scared? Never.” Clay says confidently, but he’s twisting his head around to scan all the arrivals even though George’s flight doesn’t land for another twenty minutes.

“Sureeee,” Nick smiles, even though Clay can’t see through the mask, “You shouldn’t be anyway, you’ve both been waiting like a year for this.”

Clay smiles at Nick, nodding before falling silent. Nick figures he might as well join in with Clay surveying everyone entering the airport. Arrivals always makes Nick feel happy, especially with the pandemic now, watching families, couples, friends, run to hug each other, eyes crinkling to show the smile is evident under the blue disposable mask.

Nick can’t wait till it’s Clay and George hugging for the first time.

“ *Nick* ,” Clay says urgently, tugging the younger’s sleeve, “That’s George.”

And sure enough, right in their eye line, stands George. He’s doing what Nick and Clay had been doing earlier, scanning the room for the, his hands nervously fiddling with the handle of his suitcase.

“Well?” Nick laughs, “What are you waiting for?”

Clay laughs in disbelief, turning around to Nick with a smile in his eyes, before rushing towards the lost looking British man.

It feels cliché really, watching his two best friends who have been in a long distance relationship without meeting for too long finally hug. It *is* cliché, actually.

Nick watches with butterflies in his stomach as George catches sight of Clay half running towards him, and then the oldest of the three is dropping his suitcase and running into Clay's outstretched arms.

Later, Nick will absolutely deny that he had any tears in his eyes as he watched Clay twirl George around, peppering kisses all over his face.

Living with a couple was not as fun as Nick had thought it would be. Sure, it was cute, like living in a rom com to be honest.

Nick thought it was really quite wholesome to watch George and Clay together, watch little domestic moments where George stands on his tippy toes to press a kiss to Clay's nose, or Clay laughing maniacally as he holds something above George's head so the older can't reach it.

Those moments are cute. What is *not* cute is the sound of Clay's headboard bashing against the wall repeatedly at two in the morning.

Nick finds the utmost strength in himself to not go knock on Clay's door and tell them to shut the fuck up and *please* respect the fact he also lives there. He supposes this was always destined, watching Clay and George's relationship come full circle, from watching Clay worryingly tell Nick they're together to now having to hear George get his back blown out.

Nick swears he loves them both.

End Notes

hope you enjoyed <33

also pls follow me on twitter (@rowrjtes) all my irls make fun of me for stanning mcyt
lmfoaoo

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